

Building Healthy RC/EZ/EC

Information and tools to link health improvement to economic and community development.



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Initiative for Renewal Communities, Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (RC/EZ/EC) is important to development within distressed urban and rural areas nationwide. The RC/EZ/EC Initiative assists residents and businesses in economically depressed areas opportunities and resources to improve their neighborhoods.

The Initiative has helped communities create jobs, improve housing and healthcare in urban areas, improving the lives of thousands of Americans. For more information about the HUD and the RC/EZ/EC Initiative, visit <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/ezec/index.cfm>

The Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program is designed to afford rural communities real opportunities growth and revitalization. The framework of the program is embodied in four key principles of Economic Opportunity, Sustainable Community Development, Community-based Partnerships, and Strategic Vision for Change.

For information on the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural RC/EZ/EC program, visit <http://www.ezec.gov/>

Six Components of Building a Healthy RC/EZ/EC

Good Health – Good Economy

Overall, health impacts employers, individuals and communities in numerous ways.

- Work is central to social status.
- Unemployment is associated with a large number of health risks.
- Work influences the health of families and children.
- Income inequity affects health.

Planning for a Healthy RC/EZ/EC

- Choosing the Right Approach for Health
- Assessing Needs and Assets
- Setting Priorities and Objectives
- Advisory Groups
- From Plan to Action

Mobilizing Partnerships and Making Contacts

- Choosing the Right Approach
- Defining Roles
- Keeping it Going
- Advisory Groups

Priority Health Issues

- Preventive Services
- Primary Care
- Health Insurance
- Substance Abuse
- Environmental Health
- Eliminating Barriers and Disparities

Evaluating Your Efforts

Evaluating your health planning efforts can improve upon existing programs, assist with planning future efforts, the case for funding needs or refocusing of resources, and add a sense of accountability to your programs. You can evaluate the conceptualization and design of a program, monitor program implementation, or assess the effectiveness and efficiency.

Funding

Identifying funding sources for health planning efforts is a constant challenge. However, there are a wide-variety of federal grants, foundations, corporations, and philanthropies that focus on community development efforts and can be tapped by RC/EZ/ECs.



US Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
EZ/EC *Empowerment Zones
Enterprise Communities*

Building Healthy EZ/ECs
*Information and Tools to Link Health Improvement to
Economic and Community Development*

Help is just a click away at < <http://aspe.hhs.gov/ezec> >

Since RC/EZ/ECs represent some of the nation's most economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse urban and rural areas, ASPE has initiated a multi-faceted technical assistance project that will build their capacity to eliminate health disparities and incorporate health improvement into their RC/EZ/EC economic and community development initiatives.

Learn more about EZ and EC success stories.

**Burlington Public Safety Project
Burlington, Vermont EC (Round I)**

Recognizing the importance of partnerships and the need to keep its members involved and energized, The City of Burlington, Vermont, EC's Public Safety Project emphasizes leadership development and problem solving. To keep its community interested and involved, the EC offers a Public Safety Leadership Development Series with free monthly community dinners and workshops for any interested residents. Topics include meeting facilitation, resolving neighborhood conflicts and finding solutions for problem properties. The Public Safety Project raises \$10,000 annually to be used through a grant program. This program distributes up to \$1,000 per project neighborhood associations for the use of clean-up projects, block parties, pet-awareness events, installation of deadbolt locks and motion sensor lights and park improvements.

Lowell, Massachusetts EC (Round I)

The Lowell, MA EC is administered by a grassroots board consisting of elected and appointed members drawn entirely from EC residents and small business owners. Most of the board's members are chosen by EC residents through a full-scale public nomination and Strategic Vision and Community-Based Partnerships elections process. One member represents one of the EC's eight census tracts. In addition to elected representatives, the city government appoints seven board members to ensure ethnic, gender and age diversity. These include youth and senior citizen representatives as well as a representative from one of Lowell's many minority groups. Representatives of key public and private institutions— whose support is also crucial for achieving the community's goals— are invited to serve on EC advisory committees.

One project located within the EC is the Lowell Community Health Center's teen pregnancy prevention program, known as the Lowell Teen Coalition. A similar type of advisory group oversees the Coalition. Its members include representatives from city government, the business community, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, juvenile probation, youth program staff, citizen activists and others. The advisory board looks at the direction of the program and recommends new initiatives and directions for the program. Current initiatives include investigating how appropriate the abstinence message is to the teens it serves as well as ways in which it can reach out to middle school students. It is then the responsibility of the Executive Director, who is also the Program Coordinator, to seek out resources to fulfill the mission suggested by the board. The program uses EC funds for various teen leadership initiatives including increasing youth membership in community organizations, funding recognition programs and development of leadership training programs.